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ABSTRACT

Questionnaires completed by coordinators of Korean bilingual programs, a literature review, and the author's experiences in the field were used to examine the current evaluation practices of Korean American bilingual programs, problems associated with conducting evaluations, and ways to resolve these problems. Findings showed that most programs involved outside evaluators and did not use a comparison group. Project coordinators indicated that (1) they were fairly satisfied with evaluations of student achievement but not with the tests used, (2) they were fairly satisfied with the program evaluation methods, and (3) they found the evaluations useful. The most critical problem in evaluation of Korean American bilingual programs was found to be a lack of appropriate tests to reliably and validly measure student achievement. Based on these findings, two approaches to evaluation were developed. The first requires defining the criteria for classifying a student as having limited English proficiency (LEP), describing the number of students entering and completing the program and the instructional services provided, defining criteria for exit from the program, and describing the number of students meeting the exit criteria. The second approach is similar in structure but requires classifying students as non-English speaking, limited English speaking, or fluent in English, and describing how students are reclassified during program operation. (MK)

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PRIORITY ISSUES ON THE EVALUATION OF KOREAN-AMERICAN BILINGUAL PROGRAMS*

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In the past few years, people working in the field of bilingual education have become increasingly aware of the need for objective demonstration of the effectiveness of bilingual projects. The pressure came mainly from the strengthened bilingual education evaluation requirements in both federal legislation and the legislation of several states. It also came from a growing taxpayers' concern over the accountability of bilingual projects. As a result, most bilingual projects provide a considerable amount of staff time and funds in order to have some sort of annual program evaluation. So far, however, not many projects are getting what they want from the evaluations. Furthermore, after all these years of project evaluations, no federal or state agencies seem to have any solid data which can be used to demonstrate how effective (or ineffective) the bilingual program is. Of course, this situation is not unique to the bilingual program. Other large scale educational experiments, such as ESEA Title I or the Follow-Through program, have essentially the same problem. However, citing other similar cases does not help or justify the current state of bilingual program evaluation. Given this situation, it seems warranted to examine the current evaluation practices of Korean-American bilingual projects, problems associated with conducting evaluations, and ways for resolving these problems.

Objectives of this Study

The specific objectives of this study were to answer the following questions:

1. What are the current evaluation practices of Korean-American bilingual projects?
2. Are Korean bilingual project evaluations providing the information needed by project directors or coordinators?
3. Are there appropriate models available for the evaluation of Korean bilingual projects?
4. What are the major problems at the present time in conducting evaluations of Korean bilingual projects?
5. What are some alternative evaluation approaches which might better serve the evaluation needs of Korean bilingual projects?

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Method

Before summarizing the method used for this study, it should be noted that very limited information was collected from the field, because the study had to be completed within a month. Most comments and suggestions made in this paper are largely based on the author's personal observations and opinion, rather than on information derived from empirical data.

A 4-page questionnaire was first developed to collect data on the current evaluation practices of Korean bilingual projects. It was sent in March, 1980, to the directors or coordinators of all known Korean bilingual projects which had operated during the 1978-79 school year. This information was obtained from the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Asian-American Field Office. Of 36 questionnaires sent out, 14 were returned (39%). No follow-up attempts were made. No additional data collection activities, such as reviewing project evaluation reports or on-site visits, were carried out.

In order to identify evaluation models applicable to Korean bilingual projects, several widely known evaluation theories were reviewed. However, no systematic or comprehensive literature search was made. Even if such a search had been made, in the author's opinion the results would have been essentially the same.

On the basis of information from the survey, from the limited literature review, and from personal experience, the major problems in conducting Korean bilingual evaluations were identified and some alternative approaches were proposed.

Characteristics of Korean Bilingual Projects

Several questions were included in the Korean Bilingual Program Evaluation Practices Questionnaire to collect some key background information about the Korean bilingual projects. Responses to these questions are summarized below to describe the characteristics of the Korean bilingual projects as currently operated. This description is valid to the extent that the 14 projects which returned the questionnaire represent the total of 36 Korean bilingual projects to which it was sent.

A large majority of the projects (86%) started to provide Korean bilingual instruction in the 1976-77 school year or in the 1977-78 school year. The number of students served by the projects ranged from 12 to 180, with a median of 34.

One of the Korean bilingual projects provided bilingual instruction in

a self-contained class for the whole school day. Another two projects provided bilingual instruction in a self-contained bilingual class for some portion of the day. Half of the projects provided bilingual instruction in a pull-out bilingual class for 30 minutes to five hours a day (but not necessarily five days a week). Two projects provided tutorial services to individual Korean-American students in different classes or different schools. For two projects it was reported that instruction was provided in a pull-out bilingual class at the elementary level, while tutorial service was provided to individual students at the secondary level.

With regard to the linguistic characteristics of the students served by the projects, only five projects (36%) had some fluent English speaking (FES) students. All of the 14 projects had 80% or more Non-English-speaking (NES) or Limited English-speaking (LES) students, except for one which had 58% NES or LES students. There were, in general, more LES students than NES students.

A large majority of the respondents (86%) reported that the main goal is to teach English so that the student can function in a typical class as soon as possible, and also teach other subject matter in Korean while the student is making the transition from Korean to English. Only one respondent reported that the main goal is to teach Korean or maintain the students' Korean language skills, and also teach other subject matter in Korean so that he/she becomes bilingual and biliteral. For another project two main goals were reported: first, to teach English for NES or LES students and help make the transition smooth; and second, to teach Korean language and culture to FES students to develop cultural awareness, cultural-ethnic identity, and better self-concept.

From this description, one can characterize the typical Korean bilingual project as: being relatively small; providing bilingual instruction in a pull-out class for some portion of the day or providing tutorial services to individual students; and helping students make the transition from the Korean-speaking stage to the English-speaking stage by teaching English and by teaching other subject areas in Korean during this transitional period.

Evaluation Practices of Korean Bilingual Projects

Among the 14 questionnaires returned, four had to be excluded from the analyses of evaluation practices. Two of these were not evaluated for the 1978-79 school year. The other two were evaluated, but the respondents were not familiar with the evaluation. Hence, the findings presented below are based on only 10 projects out of the total of 36 Korean bilingual projects

sent the questionnaire.

Project evaluations were carried out most often by outside (external) evaluators, or by both outside evaluators and project staff (internal evaluators). In a very few cases, the evaluation was carried out by school district evaluation staff. Two respondents said they were very satisfied with the competency of the evaluator(s), while the remaining eight said they were fairly satisfied.

Only three out of the 10 evaluations involved comparing the achievement of students in the project with a comparison group. Eight respondents reported that they were fairly satisfied with the way student achievement was evaluated. However, only one respondent reported that he/she was fairly satisfied with the tests used, while the remaining nine said they were not satisfied with the tests.

Considering the way student affective development was evaluated, four of the 10 respondents were fairly satisfied, two were not satisfied, and four said that it was not evaluated. One respondent was very satisfied with the affective measures used, three were fairly satisfied, and two were not satisfied.

A large majority of the evaluations (80%) included verifying whether the project was implemented as planned. Six respondents were fairly satisfied with the information provided by the evaluation for improving project implementation, two were not satisfied, and the remaining two said the evaluation did not provide such information.

To the question, "As a whole, how satisfied were you with the method used in the 1978-79 evaluation and the information it produced?", no one replied that he/she was very satisfied, nine replied that they were fairly satisfied, and one replied that he/she was not satisfied.

With regard to the usefulness of the evaluation information, the respondents reported that it was either very useful or fairly useful in satisfying federal or state reporting requirements. Also, it was fairly useful for the majority of the projects in clarifying or modifying project objectives, identifying possible problem areas, changing or improving teaching procedures and instructional materials, and improving project management. For the majority of the projects, the evaluation was not useful in changing or improving staff training, or in improving community relations.

To the question, "As a whole, how useful was the 1978-79 evaluation for improving your program or for analyzing your program's effectiveness?", one respondent replied it was very useful, six replied it was fairly useful, and three replied it was not useful.

From these findings on the evaluation practices of Korean bilingual projects, one can conclude that: a majority of the evaluations involved outside evaluators; a large majority of the evaluations did not use a comparison group; project directors or coordinators were fairly satisfied with the way student achievement was evaluated, but they were not satisfied with the tests used; almost all of the project directors or coordinators were fairly satisfied with the method used in the 1978-79 evaluation; and 70% of them considered the 1978-79 evaluation as either very useful or fairly useful, while 30% considered it not useful.

Search for Bilingual Program Evaluation Models

No attempt was made to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the adequacy of existing evaluation models for Korean-American bilingual projects. However, several well-known evaluation models were reviewed for their appropriateness and usefulness. This included the work of Tyler, Stufflebeam, Scriven, the Center for the Study of Evaluation, and RMC. On the basis of this review, the RMC model was selected for an in-depth examination because it was judged to be the most practical evaluation model, even though the approach is a very narrow one. Some reasons for selecting the RMC model were: (a) federal and some state laws require a summative evaluation focused on student achievement, especially in attaining English language skills, and the RMC model treats this aspect of evaluation most thoroughly; and (b) the RMC model is a procedural model that can be used as a practical guide in evaluation, while others are largely conceptual models which are not very useful when applicability is considered.

It is fully acknowledged that an evaluation should include more than the assessment of student achievement. Also, any evaluation model for bilingual programs should address the realities and complexities of bilingual project settings. However, no one can dispute the fact that the ultimate objective of any educational program is "student achievement." When people talk about "objective demonstration of project effectiveness" or "accountability of bilingual programs," their utmost concern is evidence of student achievement.

Applicability of the RMC Evaluation Model to the Evaluation of Korean Bilingual Projects

Several years ago, RMC staff worked on a project for the U.S. Office of Education to develop Project Information Packages (PIPs) for the dissemination of effective approaches to compensatory education. As a by-product of this

project, or as a necessity for completing the project, they developed the RMC evaluation model for measuring program impact in terms of student achievement. This model has further been refined and is known as the ESEA Title I Evaluation Model. It is actually five alternative models which can be used for different situations with different constraints. Each of these five models will be briefly described, then its applicability to the evaluation of Korean bilingual programs will be noted.

Posttest comparison with matched groups. This model requires that students be paired in terms of pretest measures, and that one member of each pair be randomly assigned to either the treatment group or a comparison group. After the treatment, the two groups are compared on their posttest measures. This model is almost impossible to apply to Korean bilingual projects, because students are not randomly assigned to either a bilingual program or a regular program.

Analysis of covariance model. This model is appropriate to use when pre-existing groups which are sufficiently similar are assigned to treatment and comparison conditions, or when between-groups differences are evident despite a random assignment. This model is also almost impossible to apply to Korean bilingual projects, because it is difficult to obtain a comparison group which is large enough and sufficiently similar to the bilingual program group.

Special regression model. In this model the selection of treatment participants is determined on the basis of performance on the pretest. All students in a group are pretested, and those who score above or below a particular score are assigned to the treatment group, while the remaining students serve as a comparison group. The difference between the observed and expected posttest means of the treatment group is tested, the expectation being derived from the comparison group regression line. This may be the most appropriate model for Korean bilingual project evaluation when: (a) the assignment of students to the bilingual program is based on students' pretest scores in English proficiency; and (b) all Korean-American students in a school or a district can be pre- and posttested.

General regression model. This model places no restrictions on the selection of students or on their relative pretest performance. Posttest differences between treatment and comparison groups are tested, with adjustments for the effects of any number of quantifiable variables such as pretest scores, sex, or socioeconomic status. The flexibility of this model permits an adequate

evaluation. However, the complexity of the statistical manipulation and the need for a large enough sample for both the Korean bilingual and comparison groups often prohibit its use.

Norm-referenced model. In this model the treatment group is compared to a norm group. The expectation is that the treatment group will maintain, at posttesting, the same achievement status with respect to the norm group as it had at pretesting, if the treatment did not have impact. Considering the difficulty of obtaining an adequate comparison group in bilingual program evaluation, this model may be the most practical. At the present time, however, this model cannot be used in an evaluation of Korean bilingual projects, because of the lack of standardized tests needed to measure student achievement in the areas that the projects consider as important.

It is obvious from the preceding discussion that technically sound evaluations of Korean bilingual projects cannot be made until the evaluator has at least one of the following: (a) reliable and valid tests of student achievement in the areas of major project concern and a reasonable comparison group which can be used to estimate student achievement without project participation; or (b) appropriate standardized tests of student achievement in the areas of major project concern. Needless to say, it is difficult to obtain a comparison group adequate in terms of its size and comparability, and to test it pre and post using the same test given to the project students. However, as far as the evaluation of Korean bilingual projects is concerned, the lack of appropriate tests, regardless of whether they are criterion-referenced or norm-referenced, is the most critical problem to be resolved.

What to Do to Resolve the Problem of the Lack of Appripriate Tests

The first priority for improving the evaluation of Korean bilingual projects is having reliable and valid tests for different achievement levels. This includes as a minimum: oral English proficiency and oral Korean proficiency tests (primary, intermediate, advanced); Korean reading tests (primary, intermediate, advanced); and math tests in Korean (for each grade level). Each test has to have at least two forms to be be useful in program evaluation. Adequate English reading tests and math tests in English are currently available. The needed tests should be developed through a regular test development process and have, as a minimum, a description of the instructional objectives or skills measured, evidence of acceptable reliability and validity, and directions for administering

and scoring, regardless of whether they are criterion-referenced or norm-referenced. Teacher made tests serve useful purposes in the instructional process, but they are not very useful in program evaluations.

Anyone who has experience in test development will agree that it is imposible to develop a high quality tests without spending a considerable amount of time and money. It is doubtful that such resources are available for Korean-American test development. Therefore, except for a Korean language test, it will be much more efficient and practical to translate (sometimes conceptually) widely used standardized tests such as the CTBS or SAT, rather than to develop a new test or tests. Also, an advantage of using the CTBS or SAT is that it gives some standard to compare the achievement of Korean-American students. For the development of Korean language tests, it will be more efficient to adapt standardized tests currently being used in Korea than to attempt to develop new tests. It does not make any sense to try to develop tests of basic skills which are entirely different from existing tests. Also, it is often useful to compare the achievement of Korean bilingual project students with national norms of this country or with Korean national norms in the case of Korean lanaguage skills, in spite of all the problems and shortcomings of using such norms.

Alternative Approaches to Evaluating Korean Bilingual Projects

The second priority for improving the evaluation of Korean bilingual projects is to identify or develop alternative approaches to the evaluation, while appropriate tests are being developed. Korean bilingual project staff and evaluators should seriously consider the need for changing their evaluation perspectives. They should ask themselves the question, "What are we accomplishing by administering so many tests of unknown quality, by collecting a mass of unreliable or irrelevant data through questionnaires or classroom observation, and by constantly looking for nonexisting comparison groups?"

Considering all the constraints on the evaluation of Korean bilingual projects, the evaluation will make much more sense if the focus is changed from "objective demonstration of project effectiveness" to "objective description of project accomplishments." In other words, instead of trying to prove that a student did better by participating in the bilingual project than he/she would have by participating in a regular class, one should simply describe what the project did for a student and what happened to him/her. There must be many

ways to accomplish this evaluation goal. Two of the possible approaches are described below.

Approach 1

Step 1. Define clearly the criteria for classifying a student as a limited English-proficiency student. The criteria can be defined in terms of test scores on a currently available English test, judgments of a panel of teachers, or a combination of the two. The test does not necessarily need to be the kind required for program evaluation.

Step 2. Describe how many limited English-proficiency students were in the program at the beginning of the year, how many remained in the program at the end of the year, and the reasons for students leaving the program during the year.

Step 3. Describe the special instructional services provided to the limited English-proficiency students. (For example, was there a bilingual teacher? Was there a bilingual aide? How many hours of bilingual class instruction did the student receive per week? What instructional materials were used? What was the student-teacher ratio for the bilingual class instruction? How many hours of bilingual tutoring did the student receive per week? This should be done with less than 10 items of factual information.

Step 4. Define clearly the exit criteria from the bilingual program. The criteria can be defined in terms of test scores on a currently available English test, judgments of a panel of teachers, or a combination of the two.

Step 5. Describe how many limited English-proficiency students met the exit criteria during or at the end of the school year. Do not guess how many of them would have met the exit criteria if they had participated in a regular program.

Many people will argue that this evaluation approach is too limited and inadequate. However, this may be the most realistic and useful evaluation model for Korean bilingual projects at the present time when the following two factors are considered: (a) appropriate tests are not available for most subject matter areas or for affective areas; and (b) for 86% of the programs it was reported that the main objective is to teach English so that the student can function in

a typical class as soon as possible, and also teach other subject matter in Korean while the student is making the transition from Korean to English. Furthermore, not very many previously completed bilingual evaluations provided as much information as this approach will provide.

Approach 2

Step 1. Define clearly the criteria for classifying students as non-English-speaking (NES), limited English-speaking (LES), or fluent English-speaking (FES).

Step 2. Describe how many NES, LES, and FES students were in the program at the beginning of the year, how many remained in the program at the end of the year, and the reasons for students leaving the program during the year.

Step 3. Describe the special instructional services provided to each of these three groups. (See Step 3 in Approach 1.)

Step 4. Describe how many NES students were reclassified or qualified for reclassification as LES or FES during the year or at the end of the year, using the same criteria defined in Step 1. The criteria can be defined in terms of test scores on a currently available English test, judgments by a panel of teachers, or a combination of the two. The kind of tests needed in program evaluation is not required.

Step 5. Describe how many LES students were reclassified or qualified for reclassification as FES during the year or at the end of the year, using the same criteria defined in Step 1.

Step 6. Describe how many NES, LES, and FES students made educationally significant improvement in Korean language skills during the year as judged by the bilingual teacher or bilingual aide, using the best information available to him/her. Student gains on a teacher-made Korean language test should be used as part of the information.

This is a somewhat broader approach than the first one, but still it is a very simple and straightforward approach. It does not require a comparison group, extensive criterion-referenced tests, or standardized achievement tests. The evaluation will result in a description of what the project did for program students, the proportion of NES and LES students that made the desired progress in the transition from Korean to English, and the proportion of program students

that benefited from Korean language instruction. This is not the only evaluation information which is needed or important, but it is the only evaluation information which is critical as well as obtainable for most Korean bilingual programs at the present time.

Concluding Remarks

It is understandable that the Congress, state legislatures, and federal and state agency staff members are all frustrated by their inability to obtain solid data on the effectiveness of bilingual programs. Out of this frustration, they may attempt to further strengthen the evaluation requirements or even to impose certain evaluation models for individual projects. However, this will accomplish nothing until there are appropriate student outcome measures available. "Appropriate" means "reliable" and "valid" as well as "available in many achievement levels and in alternative forms." It is time to undertake a systematic test development task, using a significant portion of the funds available for the development of bilingual instructional materials.

While the tests are being developed, which might take at least three to four years, it might be more productive to adopt an alternative evaluation approach that focuses on "objective description of project accomplishments," rather than on "objective demonstration of project effectiveness." The term "effectiveness" used in conjunction with an instructional program evaluation usually implies comparing the achievement of students in the program with those of nonparticipating students or a norm group. This is a difficult task to achieve in bilingual program evaluation. It is especially difficult in the evaluation of a Korean bilingual project because such projects have unique characteristics and many evaluation constraints. Korean bilingual projects usually serve a small number of recently immigrated children. Therefore, it is almost impossible to find enough nonparticipating recently immigrated children within the school or district who can serve as a comparison group.

The usefulness of the two alternative approaches proposed here will greatly increase if widely accepted or nationally used criteria for "limited English-proficiency" and for "program exit" become available. It will do more good for bilingual program evaluations if federal or state regulations or funding agencies supply such criteria to projects, instead of continuing to expand the evaluation requirements.

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